

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 IO-04 ISO-00 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-01 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-05 /068 W

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R 311803Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5259

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

CINCUSNAVEUR

USLOSACLANT

USNMR SHAPE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 14206

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SF, UK

SUBJECT: HMG ROW OVER CAPE TOWN PORT CALL

REF: LONDON 14002

1. SUMMARY: THE FURORE OVER THE CAPE TOWN PORT CALL BY 11 SHIPS OF THE ROYAL NAVY CONTINUED DURING WEEK OF OCT 28 AS LABOR PARTY NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEC) APPROVED RESOLUTION DEPLORING GOVERNMENT'S ACTION IN "HOLDING...NAVAL EXERCISES". FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN HAD GIVEN A SPEECH IN CARDIFF ON OCT 25 WHICH SOMEWHAT CLARIFIED HMG POLICY ON ISSUE AND APPEARED TO BE LEADING TO
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SOME DAMPENING OF THE CONSTROVERSY SURROUNDING THE ISSUE.

BUT LEFT WING OF LABOR PARTY IS NOT HAPPY WITH THE CALLAGHAN BALANCING ACT AND PROMISES TO RAISE QUESTIONS IN THE NEW PARLIAMENT AS SOON AS OPENING FORMALITIES ARE OUT OF THE WAY. HMG WILL BE UNDER PRESSURE TO MAKE SOME OVERT CHANGE IN MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITH SOUTH AFRICA BUT LOW-KEY COOPERATION PROBABLY WILL CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME.
END SUMMARY.

2. LABOR PARTY NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEC) OCT 30 APPROVED RESOLUTION WHICH "DEPLORES THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION IN HOLDING RECENT COMBINED NAVAL EXERCISES WITH SOUTH AFRICA" IN DIRECT CONTRADICTION OF PARTY POLICY AND EARLIER GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES. ORIGINAL RESOLUTION WAS SPONSORED BY LEFT-WINGERS AND CONTAINED EVEN HARSHER LANGUAGE. NEC NARROWLY APPROVED (BY VOTE OF 10 TO 9) AMENDMENT SOFTENING LANGUAGE AND INCLUDING PHRASE WHICH WELCOMED FOREIGN SECRETARY'S RECENT ASSURANCE THAT HMG WILL REVIEW SIMONSTOWN AGREEMENT, WEIGHING MILITARY ADVANTAGES AGAINST UK'S WIDER INTERESTS. CALLAGHAN REPEATED THIS ASSURANCE OCTOBER 30 IN HIS STATEMENT OPENING SECOND DAY OF DEBATE ON QUEEN'S SPEECH.

3. ON OCT 25, FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN HAD GIVEN SPEECH IN CARDIFF, WALES (HIS OWN CONSTITUENCY) IN WHICH HE MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A) UK WILL LOOK AGAIN AT THE VALUE OF THE SIMONSTOWN AGREEMENT.

B) THERE IS NO NEED FOR FURTHER GROUP VISITS BY RN SHIPS TO SOUTH AFRICA IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. IN THE MEANTIME ANY OTHER VISITS WILL BE "STRICTLY FOR MINIMUM OPERATIONAL PURPOSES".

C) THE SAG HAD TRIED TO USE THE VISIT AS "A BADGE

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OF RESPECTABILITY AND OF APPROVAL OF THEIR POLICIES".

D) SAG HAD SEIZED ON THE VISIT AS LENDING SUPPORT
AT THIS TIME BECAUSE OF PROPOSAL TO EXPEL IT FROM UN.
ALTHOUGH SUCH SAG USE OF VISIT IS NOT GOOD UK IS AGAINST
EXPULSION BECAUSE UK IS FOR UNIVERSALITY OF UN MEMBERSHIP.

4. MAJOR NEWSPAPERS CARRIED PROMINENT REPORTS ON CALLAGHAN SPEECH. MOST EMPHASIZED THAT SPEECH WAS A BALANCING ACT WHICH LEFT FUTURE OF SIMONSTOWN AGREEMENT IN DOUBT BUT WHICH PROMISED NO CHANGES IN UK POLICY. ALL NEWSPAPERS NOTED THAT STATEMENT AGAINST EXPULSION WAS BLOW TO LEFT-WING OF LABOR PARTY WHICH HAD HOPED UK WOULD FAVOR EXPULSION. MOST MEDIA COMMENT EMPHASIZED THAT CALLAGHAN-MASON ARGUMENT HAD BEEN EASED BY CALLAGHAN'S APOLOGY TO CONFIDENTIAL

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MASON (PARA 2 REFTTEL).

5. COMMENT: FACT THAT CALLAGHAN'S CARDIFF SPEECH AND PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT DID NOT PROMISE CHANGES IN SIMONSTOWN AGREEMENT HAS NOT BEEN LOST ON LABOR PARTY'S LEFT WING OR ON MODERATES WHO WERE SHOCKED BY RECENT JOINT NAVAL EXERCISE AND CAPE TOWN PORT CALL. ACCORDINGLY, THEY CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE EFFORTS TO FORCE ABROGATION OF AGREEMENT. AT THIS POINT IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER GOVERNMENT, WHICH HAS VERY NARROW MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT, IS PREPARED TO RISK PARTY UNITY ON THIS ISSUE. AS A FUR-

THER NOTE ON INTRA-LABOR PARTY ASPECTS THIS ISSUE, WE
HAVE BEEN RELIABLY INFORMED THAT CALLAGHAN PERSONALLY AND
DELIBERATELY CRITICIZED DEFENSE SECRETARY MASON TO THE
PRESS IN ORDER TO DEFLECT GROWING CRITICISM WITHIN THE
LABOR PARTY OVER THE CAPE TOWN PORT CALL.

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